

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on December 07, 2009 has been entered. Currently claims 1-4, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 20 are rejected and claims 5-7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 21-48 are cancelled.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicants' arguments are moot in view of a new ground of rejection.

Response to Amendments

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 2, 4, 11, 14, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lubow et al (US Pub: US 2006/0118631) and in further view of Pinchen et al (US Patent.: 7,188,774) and Dymetman et al (US Patent: 6,330,976).

Regarding claim 1 (currently amended), Lubow et al teach: A method of printing interface surfaces associated with a product item, the method including the steps of: determining product identity data, the product identity data identifies the product such that the product is distinguished from each other product [p0017]; and, (b) controlling a printer to thereby print a plurality of coded data portions on the interface surface, the data of each coded data portion being indicative of the product identity data [p0086, p0087].

Lubow et al do not specify each product item to be uniquely identified from other product items. In the same field of endeavor, Pinchen et al teach: the product identity data being indicative of an identity of the product item such that the product item is distinguished from each other product item [col 1: lines 14-21] and controlling a printer to thereby print a plurality of coded data portions on the interface surface, the data of each coded data portion being indicative of the product identity data [col 2: lines 31-67, col 3: lines 1-39]; and storing a mapping which maps the identities of the interface surfaces to the product identity data [fig. 23]. Uniquely identifying a product item has been well practiced in the art as prescribed by Pinchen et al. Therefore, it would have been obvious for an ordinary skilled in the art to modify Lubow et al's teaching to tag each product item with unique identification for the purpose of easy recognition or identification associated with after market service such as warranty registration or for security purpose.

Pinchen et al teach the coded data being indicative of a predetermined location in [col 3: lines 19-22, 36-39]. However, Lubow et al and Pinchen et al do not disclose

the coded data portion encoding unique identity of the position of the coded data portion on the interface surface. In the same field of endeavor, Dymetman et al teach: controlling a printer to thereby print a plurality of coded data portions on the interface surfaces, each coded data portion encoding a unique identity of the interface surface on which the coded data portion is printed and of the position of the coded data portion on the interface surface on which the coded data portion is printed [col 12: lines 26-67, col 13: lines 1-19]. Having a coded data uniquely indicative of the interface surface and the respective position of the coded data on the interface surface has been well practiced in the art as prescribed by Dymetman et al. Therefore, it would have been obvious for an ordinary skilled in the art to modify the combined teaching of Lubow et al and Pinchen et al to incorporate the position information as part of coded data for forming a composite bar code by precisely printing a second code next to a first one whose relative position can be obtained by scanning itself.

Regarding claim 2 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Lubow et al further teach: the method of claim 1, wherein the determining step includes the sub-steps of: receiving indicating data at least partially indicative of the identity of the product items; and, generating, using the indicating data, the product identity data [p0047].

Regarding claim 4 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Lubow et al further teach: The

method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the product item and the interface surface is associated with a barcode, and the determining step includes sensing the barcode to determine the product identity data [p0087].

Regarding claim 11 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Pinchen et al further teach: The method of any one of claim 1, wherein the coded data portions are printed in infrared ink [col 13: lines 12-19].

Regarding claim 14 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Lubow et al further teach: The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step includes the sub-steps of: determining an identifier indicative of a nature of the product item [p0087: lines 15-17]; generating a serial number [p0087: lines 17-20. A serial number can be a commodity number.]; and forming the product identity data from the identifier and the serial number [p0086: lines 23-32]

Regarding claim 17 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Lubow et al do not specify an EPC associated with the product item. Since EPC (Electronic Product Code) is a type of application of RFID technology, Pinchen et al further teach: the method of claim 1,

wherein the product identity data is indicative of an EPC associated with the product item [col 11: lines 5-12, col 13: lines 65-67].

5. Claims 3 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lubow et al (US Pub: US 2006/0118631), Pinchen et al (US Patent.: 7,188,774) and Dymetman et al (US Patent: 6,330,976); and in further view of Klein (US Pub: 2001/0037248).

Regarding claims 3 and 8 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Pinchen et al briefly mention RFID tag without further elaboration in [col 11: lines 5-12]. In the same field of endeavor, Klein further teaches: The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the product item and the interface surface is associated with an RFID tag, and the determining step includes reading the RFID tag to determine the product identity data [p0014, p0017, p0020, p0021]. Using RFID tags for product identification has been well known and practiced in the art as prescribed by Pinchen et al and Klein. Therefore, it would have been an obvious variation for an ordinary skilled in the art to substitute RFID tag for Lubow's barcode for offering a better range and stronger signal for scanning operation.

6. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lubow et al (US Pub: US 2006/0118631), Pinchen et al (US Patent.: 7,188,774) and Dymetman et al (US Patent: 6,330,976); and in further view of Endoh (Patent No.: 5,818,031).

Regarding claim 20 (previously presented), the rationale applied to the rejection of claim 1 has been incorporated herein. Lubow et al teach redundant barcodes in [p0042, lines 9-14]. However, Lubow et al, Pinchen et al, and Dymetman et al do not teach encoding a bar code using Reed-Solomon code. In the same field of endeavor, Endoh teaches: The method of claim 1, wherein the coded data portions are encoded using Reed-Solomon encoding [col 2, lines 56-64]. Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skilled in the art to combine Lubow et al and Endoh's teaching to redundantly encode bar codes with Reed-Solomon code for improving the probability of reading the bar codes printed on mails as prescribed by Endoh.

Contact

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fan Zhang whose telephone number is (571) 270-3751. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri from 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark K. Zimmerman can be reached on (571) 272-7653. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

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